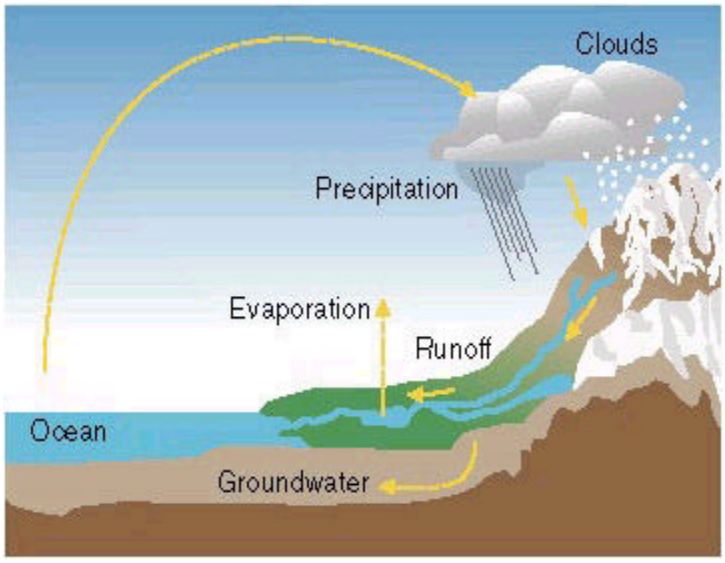
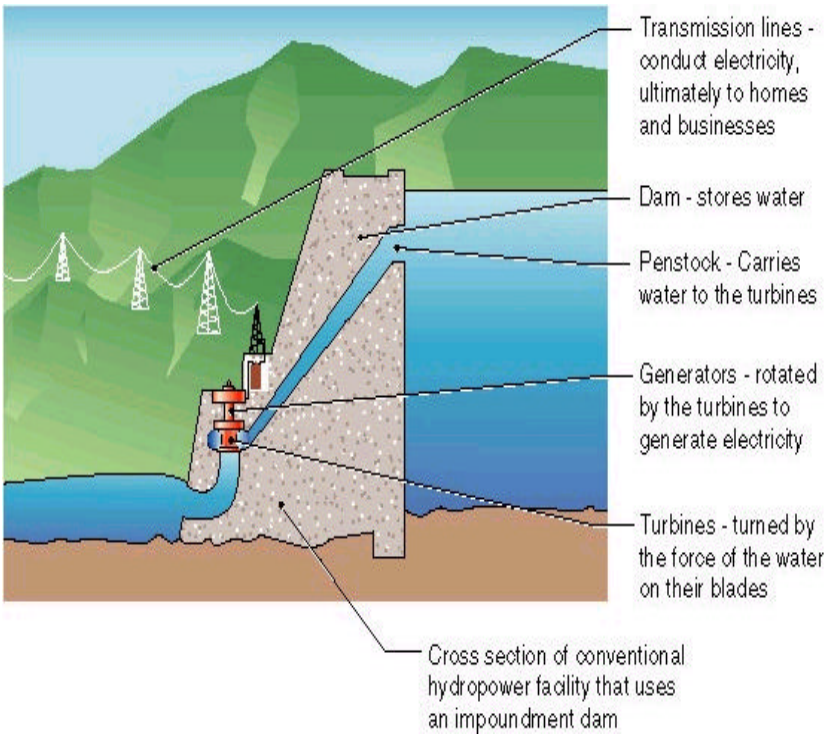
Hydropower Fact Sheet
Oroville Facilities Relicensing (FERC Project No. 2100)

Power From Water

During winter, water from pacific storms accumulates as snow in the upper reaches of the Sierra Nevada's western slopes. In the spring, as the days grow longer and warmer, the winter snow melts, and cascades down streams and rivers into California's great Central Valley, through the Golden Gate to the Pacific Ocean.

Anyone who has stood near a waterfall during the spring run-off can feel the awesome power of water. Uncontrolled, water can be a potent force moving giant boulders, flooding farmland, or carving canyons from solid rock. Controlled, it can be managed to lessen flood risks to towns and cities, create energy, irrigate farmlands, and provide drinking water to a growing population.





g water. Early in our history people used running water to grind wheat under stone wheels, and run the machinery of the early industrial revolution. As technology developed, hydroelectric projects were placed in areas where water could be stored behind a dam while the force of falling water could be funneled through a pipe to turn a large water wheel called a turbine. This action allows a shaft to rotate a series of magnets past copper coils in a generator to produce electricity. Storage allows hydropower and water supply to be available during seasons when runoff is low and needs are high.